

The Housing Authority of the Town of Fairfield
15 Pine Tree Lane
Fairfield, Connecticut 06825

Housing Committee-Public Hearing on Proposed S.B. No. 363

***AN ACT TRANSFERRING FUNDS DEPOSITED IN THE
COMMUNITY INVESTMENT ACCOUNT TO THE
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING***

MARCH 4, 2014

Written Testimony of Carol J Martin

Honorable Members of the Housing Committee:

I would like to take this opportunity to express my full support of SB 363 for transferring the contemplated funds to the Department of Housing ("Department"). Since the creation of the Department of Housing and appointment of Commissioner Klein, the Department has successfully coordinated and maximized the various housing funds under the Department's control to the benefit of residents across the State. Hence, the contemplated transfer of funds to the Department only furthers the goal of serving more families and individuals and empowering residents to participate in revitalization of their communities. In short, Commissioner Klein and staff have demonstrated their ability and commitment to maximizing benefits to the State and residents that reside in the State's housing portfolio.

Setting aside funds specifically for technical assistance for resident participation and creating resident leadership organizations is critical to addressing the State's goal of redeveloping and stabilizing its affordable housing portfolio. I recently have had first hand experience with how existing residents and a resident council play an important role in the redevelopment and reinvention of their communities.

I had the pleasure working with the Corbin Heights & Pinnacle Heights Extension Resident Council in New Britain in redeveloping their communities. Without hesitation, I may state for the record that the involvement of all residents and the Council in their leadership role were instrumental in obtaining funding, achieving local land use approvals and engaging their neighbors in support of the project. It was however a journey that required the technical support and training of the Publicly Assisted Housing Resident Network (PHRN) and the Connecticut Housing Coalition.

Many of the State housing communities have residents very interested in participating in shaping their new neighborhoods and improving the overall quality of life. However, these residents need access to some basic information and expertise in understanding the process and in collaborating with developers, lenders and other interested stakeholders.

The Housing Authority of the Town of Fairfield
15 Pine Tree Lane
Fairfield, Connecticut 06825

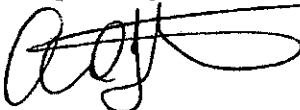
In the case of Corbin Heights and Pinnacle Heights Extension, PHRN provided that technical expertise and training and the residents responded by assisting the developer and other stakeholders in achieving the new community. The new community currently under construction will serve a mix of incomes, be professionally managed, and offer a greater degree of resident services.

The rules governing the new community were developed with property manager and resident leaders collectively engaged to insure safe and peaceful enjoyment of the property, adequate play areas for children, appropriate open space, and walkable spaces that fosters a true neighborhood in the traditional sense. As well intentioned as the developer and lenders were in their commitments, this community will be successful and sustainable because the residents were part of the planning and development every step of the way. There is a shared expectation and vision that all who live and visit the new community shall respect their homes and their neighbors.

The need for the technical assistance and professional support to residents during revitalization is so important in achieving a successful project. I strongly encourage the passage of this Bill.

Thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration.

Respectfully submitted,



Carol J Martin
Executive Director